A Brief

Examination and State

OF

Liberty Spiritual,

BOTH

With Respect to Persons in their Private Capacity, and in their Church Society and Communion.

Written for the Establishment of the Faithful, Information of the Simple-Hearted, and Reproof of the Arrogant and High Minded, by a Lover of True Liberty, *as it is in Jesus,*

William Penn.

To go amongst the People of the Lord, called *Quakers.*

If the Truth *make ye* Free, *then are ye Free* indeed. *If we walk in the Light as he is in the Light, then have we* Fellowship *one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin,* 1 John 8.

London, *Printed by* Andrew Sowle, *and sold at his Shop in* Devonshire *Buildings, without* Bishops-Gate, 1681.

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To the People of the Lord, called QUAKERS.

Dear Friends and Brethren;

IT hath of long time reſted with ſome preſſure upon my Spirit, for *Zion's* ſake, and the Peace of *Jeruſalem*, to write ſomething of the *Nature of True Spiritual Liberty*; **Liberty**, one of the moſt Glorious Words and Things in the World, but little underſtood, and frequently abuſed by many. I beſeech Almighty God to preſerve you, his People, in the right Knowledge & Uſe of that *Liberty*, which *Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Captain of our Salvation* hath purchaſed for us, and is redeeming us into, who hath *led Captivity captive*, and is *giving Gifts to them that truly believe in his Name*. Chriſt's *Liberty* is obtain'd through Chriſt's *Croſs*; they that would be his *Free-men*, muſt be his *Bonds-men*, and wear his bleſſed *Yoke*. His *Liberty* is *from Sin*, *not to Sin*; to do his Will, and not our own; no, not to ſpeak an Idle Word. 'Tis *not I that live* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *but Chriſt that liveth in me*, who had *ſet him Free from the Power of Sin, and brought Immortality to Light* in him; whence he learned thus to triumph, *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory!* This is the Perſonal *Freedom* that comes by *Jeſus Chriſt*, to as many as receive him in the Way, and for the End for which God hath given him, to wit,

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to be a Saviour and a Leader, to ſave us from our Corruptions, and guide us in the Narrow Way of his holy Croſs, and through the ſtrait Gate of Self-denyal, which lead to *Eternal Life*. And as many as have entered at this Door, are come to have *Unity with God, and one with another*; *To love him above all, and their Neighbours as themſelves*; yea, to prefer each other before themſelves. Such will not violate the great Law of their Lord and Maſter; *Love one another*, the *New*; and yet the *Old Commandment*: Theſe dwell in *Love*, and ſo they dwell in *God*; *for God is Love*. 'Twas the beloved Diſciples Teſtimony, and it comes up to what another man of God hath ſaid, namely, *The Church that dwells in God, if ſhe dwells in God, then in Love; conſequently her Members are in Union, of one Mind in Church Matters, ſince ſhe has but one Head to Rule her.*

Peruſe this brief Diſcourſe in this *Love*, and it may be to Edification. My aim is to aſſert the Truth, detect Error, and point in true Brotherly Kindneſs at thoſe Shoals and Sands ſome by Miſtake, or Over-boldneſs, have and may run upon. *O Friends!* I greatly deſire, that the Spirit of *Love, Wiſdom, and a ſound Underſtanding, of Meekneſs, Judgment and Mercy* may ever reſt upon you, that blamelesly you may be kept, an holy Family, at Unity with it ſelf, to the Lord God your Redeemer, that he over all may in you, through you, and by you be Exalted, Honoured and Praiſed, who is worthy and bleſſed forever.

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OF

Liberty Spiritual, &c.

Question. *What is Spiritual Liberty?*

Answer, It is twofold; there is a true and a false Liberty, as a true and false Spirit, the right discerning of which concerns every ones Eternal Well-beeing.

Qu. *What is true Spiritual Liberty?*

Answ. Deliverance from Sin by the Perfect Law in the Heart, *The Perfect Law of Liberty*, James 2. otherwise called, *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, that makes Free from the Law of Sin and Death*; else-where stiled, *The Law of Truth writ in the Heart*, which makes Free indeed, as saith Christ, *If the Truth make you Free, then are you Free indeed.* So that the Liberty of Gods People stands *in the Truth, and their Communion in it*, and in the Perfect Spiritual Law of Christ Jesus, which delivers and preserves them from every Evil Thing that doth or would embondage. In this blessed Liberty, it is not the Will nor Wisdom of man, neither the vain Affections and Lusts that rule, or give Law to the Soul; for the Minds of all such as are made Free by the Truth, are by the Truth conducted in doing and suffering through their Earthly Pilgrimage.

Qu. *What is False Liberty?*

Answ. A Departing from this blessed Spirit of Truth, and *a Rebelling against this Perfect Law of Liberty in the Heart*, and being at Liberty to do our own Wills; upon which cometh Reproof and Judgment.

Qu. *But are there not ſome things wherein we ought to be left to our own freedom?*

Anſw. We are not our own, for we are bought with a Price; and in all things ought we to glorifie God with our Bodies, Souls and Spirits, which are the Lords.

Qu. *But muſt we have a Motion or Command from the Spirit of Truth for all things that we do?*

Anſw. That may be according to the Truth, which may not be by the immediate Motion or Command of the Truth; for that is according to the Truth, that is not againſt the Mind of the Truth, either particularly or generally expreſt. The Truth commands me to *do all to the Praiſe and Glory of God*; but not that I ſhould wait for a Motion to do every particular thing. For *Example:* The variety of Actions in Trading, Commerce and Husbandry, the variety of Fleſh, Fiſh and Fowl for Food, with more of the ſame Nature, in all which there is a Choice and Liberty, but ſtill according to the Truth, and within the holy Bounds and Limits of it.

Qu. *Then it ſeems there are ſome things left to our Freedom.*

Anſw. Yes; but it muſt ſtill be according to the Mind of Gods Truth: There are things enjoyned, ſuch as relate to our Duty to God, to our Superiours, to the Houſhold of Faith, and to all Men and Creatures, theſe are *Indifferible*. There are alſo things that may be done or left undone, which may be called *Indifferent*; as what ſort of Meat I will eat to day, whether I will eat Fleſh, Fiſh or Herbs, or what Hours I will eat my Meals at, with many ſuch outward things of Life and Converſe; yet even in theſe caſes I ought to act according to the Truth, in the Temperance and Wiſdom of it.

Qu. *But doth not Freedom extend farther than this; for ſince God hath given me a Manifeſtation of his Spirit to profit withal, and that I have the Gift of God in my ſelf, ſhould I not be left to act according as I am free and perſwaded in my own Mind, in the things that relate to God, leſt looking upon my ſelf as obliged by what is revealed unto another, though it be not revealed unto me, I ſhould be led out of my own Meaſure, and act upon anothers Motion, and ſo offer a blind Sacrifice to God?*

Anſw. This is true in a ſence, that is, if thou art ſuch an one that

that canſt do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth, then mayſt thou ſafely be left to thy freedom in the things of God, and the Reaſon is plain; Becauſe thy Freedom ſtands in the Perfect Law of Liberty, in the Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, and in the Truth, which is Chriſt Jeſus, which makes thee Free indeed, that is, Perfectly Free from all that is Bad, and perfectly Free to all that is *Holy*, *Juſt*, *Lovely*, *Honeſt*, *Comely*, *and of good Report*; but if thou pleadeſt thy Freedom againſt ſuch things, yea, obſtructeſt and ſlighteſt ſuch *Good*, *Wholeſome* and *Requiſit* Things, thy Freedom is Naught, Dark, Perverſe, out of the Truth, and againſt the perfect Law of Love and Liberty.

Qu. *But muſt I conform to things whether I can receive them or no? Ought I not to be left to the Grace and Spirit of God in my own Heart?*

Anſw. To the firſt part of the Queſtion, Nay; to the laſt, Yea. But now let us conſider what is the Reaſon thou canſt not receive them: Is the fault in the things themſelves? Are they inconſiſtent with Truth, or will not the Truth own or aſſent unto them, or is the fault in thee? that is to ſay, Is it thy Weakneſs, or thy Careleſneſs? If thy *Weakneſs*, it is to be born with, and to be informed; if thy *Careleſneſs*, thou oughtſt to be admoniſhed; for it is a dangerous Principle, and pernicious to true Religion, and which is worſe, it is the *Root* of *Ranterism* to aſſert, *That nothing is a Duty incumbent upon thee, but what thou art perſwaded is thy Duty*; for the *Seared* Conſcience pleads his Liberty againſt all Duty, the *Dark* Conſcience is here unconcerned, the *Dead* Conſcience is here uncondemned, unleſs this Diſtinction be allowed of, that there may be an Ignorance or an Inſenſibility from *Inability* or *Incapacity*, or a Dark *Education*, and an Ignorance and Inſenſibility, from *Careleſneſs*, *Diſobedience*, *Prejudice*, &c. So that though thou art not to conform to a thing ignorantly, yet thou art ſeriouſly to conſider, why thou art ignorant, and what the cauſe of ſuch Ignorance may be; certainly it can't be in God, nor in his Gift to thee; it muſt then needs be in thy ſelf, who haſt not yet received a Senſe for or againſt the Matter, about which thou art in doubt. To the ſecond part of the Queſtion; *Ought I not to be left to the Grace of God in my own Heart?* *Anſ.* That is of all

things moſt deſirable, ſince they are well left that are there left; for there is no fear of want of Unity, where all are left with the one Spirit of Truth; they muſt be of one Mind, they can't be otherwiſe. So that to plead this againſt Unity, is to abuſe the very Plea, and to commit the greateſt Contradiction to that very Doctrine of Scripture, viz. *That all ſhould be guided by the Grace and Spirit of God in themſelves*; for the end of that Doctrine is, certainty. *They ſhall all know me, ſaith the Lord, from the leaſt to the greateſt: And I will give them one Heart, and one Way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their Children after them*, Jer. 32. 39. *And I will give them one Heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you; and I will take the Stony Heart out of their Fleſh, and will give them an Heart of Fleſh*, Ezekiel 11. 19. *And the multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul*, Acts 4. 32. Is not this Unity too? *I will reſtore unto you a pure Language; they ſhall be of one Heart and of one Mind, and great ſhall be their Peace.* Therefore I muſt ſay to thee, Friend, What if thou wilt not be left with the Grace and Spirit of God in thy ſelf, nor wait for its Mind, nor be watchful to its Revelations, nor humble and quiet till thou haſt received ſuch neceſſary Manifeſtations, but pleadeſt againſt the Counſel of the Spirit of the Lord in other faithful Perſons, under the pretence of being left to his Spirit in thy ſelf; by which means thou oppoſeſt the Spirit to the Spirit, and pleadeſt for Diſ-unity, under the Name of *Liberty*; I ask thee, May not I exhort thee to the Practice of that I am moved to preſs thee to the Practice of? If not, thou art the Impoſer, by reſtraining me from my *Chriſtian Liberty*; and not only ſo, but away goeth Preaching, and with it the Scriptures, that are both appointed of God for *Exhortation*, *Reproof* and *Inſtruction*.

Qu. *But are there not various Meaſures, diverſities of Gifts, and ſeveral Offices in the Body?*

Anſw. True; but therefore are not the Members of one Mind, one Will and one Judgment in common and univerſal Matters, eſpecially relating to the Family and Church of God? And indeed there can't be a falſer Reaſoning than to conclude *Diſcord* from *Diverſity*, *Contrariety* from *Variety*. Is there Contrariety of *Bloods*, *Lifes*, *Feelings*, *Seeings*, *Hearings*, *Taſtings*, *Smellings*

Smellings in one and the ſame Body, at one and the ſame time? No ſuch matter: Experience is a Demonſtration againſt all ſuch Inſinuations. So that though it be granted, that there is Diverſity of Gifts, yet there is no Diſagreement in Senſe; and though Variety of Offices, yet no Contrariety in Judgment concerning thoſe Offices. Well ſaith the holy Scriptures of Truth, *there is but One God; the Lord our God is but One Lord; there is but One God and Father of all things (that are good;) and there is but One Lord, One Faith and One Baptiſm*; and his Light, Life and Spirit is at Unity with it ſelf in all; what comes from the Light, Life or Spirit in one, it is the ſame in Truth and Unity to the reſt, as if it riſe in themſelves: This is ſeen in our Aſſemblies every day, and will be throughout all Generations in the Church of God, among thoſe that live in the lowly Truth, in which the pure Senſe and ſound Judgment ſtands; *God is not the God of Confuſion, but Order:* Every one in his Order is ſatisfied, hath Unity and true Fellowſhip with whatever comes from the Life of God in another; for this precious Life reacheth throughout the Heritage of God, and is the common Life that giveth the common Feeling and Senſe to the Heritage of God. Degree or Meaſure in the ſame Life can never contradict or obſtruct that which is from the ſame Life for the common Benefit of the Family of God. *The Lord is the Unmeaſurable and Incomprehenſible Glorious being of Life*, yet have we Unity with him in all his Works, who are come to his divine Meaſure of Light and Truth in our own Hearts, and live therein; and ſhall we not have Unity with that which proceeds from a Fellow Creature? In ſhort; the Saints Way is in the Light, wherein there is neither Doubts nor Diſcord; yea, they are Children of the Light, and called *Light*, and *The Lights of the World*; and can it be ſuppoſed that ſuch ſhould diſagree and contradict each other in their exteriour Order and Practice in the Church before the World; Oh, the bleſſed Seamleſs Garment of Jeſus! where that is known, theſe things can never riſe. But yet again, *The Juſt Mans Path* is not only a Light, *but a ſhining Light*, Brightneſs it ſelf: Certainly there can be no ſtumbling. It is alſo ſaid, *That Light is ſown for the Righteous*; then the Righteous ſhall never want Light upon any occaſion: And ſaith that beloved Evangeliſt and Apoſtle of

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our Lord Jesus Christ, *They that walk in the Light have Fellowship one with another*, 1 John 1. Whence it is easie to conclude, they that go out of the Fellowship, go out of the Light; but if they that walk in the Light, have Fellowship one with another, what shall we say of those that plead being left to the Light, to justifie their not having Fellowship one with another? and which is yet worse, who suppose People may Conscientiously and Justifiably Dissent within themselves, and that by reason of the Variety of the Degrees of the Spirit and Grace that are given of God unto them; as if the lesser Degree may dissent from the greater, because of its not being able to comprehend it. And to make this Principle more Authentick, such tell us, *This is the Antient Principle of Truth*; and object, *How will you else be able to maintain the* Quakers *Principles?* The Fallacy of all which, lieth (as I said before) in not rightly distinguishing between Diversity and Disagreement, Variety and Contrariety; for this Diversity hath Concord, and this Variety hath Unity: And it is a Blindness that hath too much of late happened to some, by going from the one Life and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, first to fall into Disagreements, and then plead for it, under the Notion of *Diversity of Measures*. I would ask all such Persons, who arrogate to themselves such a peculiar Knowledge of the Antient Principles of Truth, or the *Quakers* first Principles; 1st, *Whether they believe there be a Christian Body?* 2dly, *Whether this Body hath a Head?* 3dly, *Whether Christ be not this Head?* 4thly, *Whether this Head be without Eyes, Ears, Smell and Taste, and this Body without Sence and Feeling?* If not, *Whether this Head Seeth, Heareth, Smelleth, Tasteth* DIFFERINGLY *and* CONTRARILY *to it self? And whether this Body hath a Contrary Feeling at the same time about the same thing?* And if it be true, that the Church of Christ, redeemed by his most precious Blood to live to him, see with the same Eye, hear with the same Ear, speak with the same Mouth, live by the same Breath, and are led by the same Spirit, where is this *Disagreement, Contrariety* or *Dissent* about the things of his *Church?*

Qu. *But the Members of Christs Church in the Primitives had* different Apprehensions; *as the Apostles, and the People gathered by them.*

Answ.

Anſw. Pray let me know who they were, and in what Caſes?

Qu. *The Perſons were* PAUL *and* PETER, *and thoſe* Chriſtians *that differ'd about Meats; and the Scripture is plain in the Caſe.*

Anſw. The *Difference* between *Peter* and *Paul* [in the *Acts*] teſtifies the Weakneſs of *Peter*, and the place juſtifies *Paul*'s Reproof of his too great Compliance with the *Jews* in ſome of their *Rites*; which makes againſt *Liberty of various Practices* in the Church of Chriſt, and not for indulging them. That Inſtance about the Difference of *Chriſtians* as to *Meats*, &c. has nothing in it to the end for which it is alledged; for this related not to *Church-Order* or *Communion*, but Private and *Perſonal Freedoms*, what each might do with reſpect to themſelves; that is, they might make Laws to themſelves, in things that only concern'd private Perſons, and it centred there; Here, *What I will eat*, *When I will eat*; things to my ſelf, and for my ſelf, as a man having Power over my own Appetite: This *Liberty* in things Private, Perſonal and Indifferent, makes nothing for *Diſſenting about Church Matters in things of Communion and Society*, and that alſo are not Indifferent, as to *eat Fiſh*, or *eat Fleſh*, or *eat Herbs*, plainly is: But neceſſary; As to be careful and orderly about the External Buſineſs of the Church: Theſe are no *Jewiſh Rites*, nor *Shadowy Ceremonies*, no *Meats* nor *Drinks* that are Private and Perſonal, where Weakneſs is apt to miſtake (That were an Unneceſſary and an *Unchriſtian Yoke* to bear) but things comely, orderly and of good Report, that tend to Purity, Peace and Diligence in things acceptable to God, and requiſit among his People in their Temporal Chriſtian Capacity. And herein the Apoſtle *Paul* exerciſed his Godly *Authority*; and we find that not only thoſe that oppoſed themſelves to it, as thinking, *he took too much upon him*, (*demanding a Mark of Chriſts ſpeaking in him*) are in Scripture branded with *Contention*. But the true Believers, that had in themſelves a *Mark of Chriſts ſpeaking in him*, were of *One Mind, and avoided ſuch as were given to Contention*; for it was not the Cuſtom of the Churches of Chriſt. Thus were Chriſt's People of *One Heart*, in things relating to their Communion. Yet a little further; They that have the Mind of Chriſt, are of One Mind; for Chriſt is not divided: They that have Chriſt for their Head, have One Counſellor and Prophet,

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One Seer and Biſhop, they diſagree not in their Judgments in things relating to him, and the good of his Church; they have one and the ſame Guide; *For the one Spirit, into which they have all drank, and by it are baptized into one Body, leads them all.* Now to every Member is *a Meaſure of the ſame Spirit given to profit with*; and though every Member is not an *Eye*, nor an *Ear*, nor a *Mouth*, yet every Member hath Unity with the *Eye*, with the *Ear*, with the *Mouth* in their proper and reſpective Acts, and they one with the other: The *Eye* ſees for the *Mouth*, the *Mouth* ſpeaks for the *Eye*, and the *Ear* hears for *both*; this Variety hath no Diſcord, but in this Diverſity of Gifts and Offices, each Member is ſenſible of the other, and moves and acts by one and the ſame Life, Spirit and Guidance, which is Omnipreſent proportionable to every Member in its diſtinct Office. It muſt be granted, that there are Helps in the Church, as well as that there is a Church at all; and the holy Ghoſt has compared thoſe Helps (as is before mentioned) to ſeveral Members and Senſes of mans Body, as an *Eye*, an *Hand*, a *Foot*, *Hearing*, *Smelling*, *&c.* All then cannot be the Eye, neither can all be the Hand, for then they would confound their Office, and act diſagreeably to the Ordination of the great Orderer of his Church. And if I will not comply with him that God hath made an *Eye*, becauſe I am not that Eye, or an Hand, becauſe I am not that Member my ſelf, nor a Party to the Action, or Performance of that Member, I reſiſt the Lord, though under pretence of reſiſting man for the Lords ſake. And truly, this is the Rock that ſome of our own time, as well as Perſons of former Ages have ſplit upon; they have not been contented with their own Station in the Body, they have not kept to their own Gift, nor been taken up with the Duty of their own place in the Church. If he that is a Foot would be an Hand, and the Hand covets to be an Eye, envying others their allotted Station, through highth of Mind, and walking looſe from the holy Croſs, there can be no ſuch thing as Concord and Fellowſhip in the Church of Chriſt.

Furthermore, ſince the Spirit of the Lord is one in all, it ought to be obeyed through another, as well as in ones ſelf; and this I affirm to you, That the ſame lowly frame of Mind that receives and anſwers the Mind of the Spirit of the Lord in a

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mans ſelf, will receive and have Unity with the Mind of the ſame Spirit through another, and the Reaſon is plain; Becauſe the ſame Self-evidencing Power and Virtue that ariſeth from the Meaſure of the Spirit of Truth in ones ſelf, and that convinceth a man in his own Heart, doth alſo attend the Diſcovery of the Mind of the ſame Spirit, when delivered by another; for the words of the *Second Adam, the quickning Spirit* through another, are Spirit and Life, as well as in thy own particular; this is diſcerned by the Spiritual Man that judgeth all things, although the Carnal Man pleadeth, *Being left to his Freedom*; and it may be talks of *being left to the Spirit in himſelf too*, the better to eſcape the Senſe and Judgment of the Spiritual Man. It is my earneſt Deſire, that all that have any Knowledge of the Lord, would have a tender care how they uſe that Plea againſt their faithful Brethren, that God put into their Mouthes againſt the perſecuting Prieſts and Hirelings of the World, namely, *I muſt mind the Spirit of God in my ſelf*; for though it be a great Truth that all are to be thereunto left, yet it is as true, that he whoſe Soul is left with the Spirit of Truth in himſelf, differs not from his Brethren that are in the ſame Spirit; and as true it is, that thoſe who err from the Spirit of Truth, may plead, *being left to the Spirit in themſelves*, againſt the Motion and Command of the Spirit through another, when it pleaſeth not his or her high Mind and perverſe Will; for a Saying may be true or falſe, according to the ſubject Matters it is ſpoken upon, or applyed to; We own the Aſſertion, we deny the Application: There lies the Snare. 'Tis true, the People of God ought to be left to the Guidings of the Spirit of God in themſelves; but for this to be ſo applied, as to diſregard the Preachings or Writings of Chriſt's enlightned Servants, becauſe by them applied properly to the Preaching or Writing of falſe Prophets and Seducers, will by no means follow. I ſay the Doctrine is true, but not excluſively of all external Counſel or Direction; therefore falſe in application, where men are allowed to have had the fear of God, and the mind of his Spirit, and are not proved to have acted in their own Wills and Wiſdom, or without the guidance of the Spirit of God, about the things of his Church and Kingdom.

Qu. *But though this be true, which hath been alledged for heavenly Concord, yet what if I do not presently see that Service in a thing, that the rest of my Brethren agree in; in this case what is my Duty and theirs?*

Answ. It is thy Duty to wait upon God in Silence and Patience, out of all fleshly Consultations; and as thou abidest in the Simplicity of the Truth, thou wilt receive an Understanding with the rest of thy Brethren about the thing doubted: And it is their Duty, whilst thou behavest thy self in Meekness and Humility, to bear with thee, and carry themselves tenderly and lovingly towards thee; but if on the contrary, thou disturbest their Godly Care and Practice, and growest Contentious, and exalts thy Judgment against them, they have Power from God to Exhort, Admonish and Reprove thee; and (if thou persevereſt therein) in his Name to refuse any further Fellowship with thee, till thou repentest of thy Evil.

Qu. *But lest I should mistake, when thou speakest of true Liberty, that it stands in being made Free by the Truth, from all Unrighteousness,* dost thou mean, That *no other Persons ought to have the Liberty of Exercising their Dissenting Consciences, but that Force may be lawful to reduce such as are reputed Erroniously Conscientious?*

Answ. By no means: It were a great Wickedness against God, who is Lord of the Souls and Spirits of men, and ought to preside in all Consciences, who, as the Apostle saith, is the only *Potentate*, and *hath Immortality*. For though I give the true Liberty of Soul and Conscience to those only that are set free by the Power of Christ, from the Bondage of Sin and Captivity of Death, yet do I not intend, that any Person or Persons should be in the least harm'd for the external Exercise of their Dissenting Consciences in Worship to God, though Erronious; for though their Consciences be blind, yet they are not to be forced; such Compulsion giveth no sight, neither do Corporal Punishments produce Conviction: This we above all People in our Day have withstood, in Speaking, Writing and Suffering, and blessed be God, continue so to do with faithfulness. For *Faith* is the Gift of God, and forced Sacrifices are not pleasing to the Lord.

Qu. *But according to thy Argument, it may be my Fault, that I have*

have not the Gift of Faith; and upon this Presumption, it may be, thou wilt inflict some Temporal Penalties upon me.

Answ. No such matter; for such kind of Faults are not to be punished with Temporal or Worldly Penalties; for whether the Errors be through Weakness or Willfulness, not relating to Moral Practice, all External Coertion and Corporal Punishment is excluded. *For the Weapons of our Warfair are not Carnal, but Spiritual.*

Qu. *But what then is the Extent of the Power of the Church of Christ, in case of Schism or Heresie?*

Answ. The Power that Christ gave to his Church was this, *That Offenders, after the first and second Admonition,* (not Repenting) *should be Rejected:* Not Imprisoned, Plundered, Banished or put to Death; this belongs to the Whore and false Prophet: Oh! all these things have come to pass for want of Humility, for want of the antient Fear, and keeping in the quiet Habitation of the Just: The Truth in you all shall answer me. And this I affirm, from the Understanding I have received of God, not only that the Enemy is at work to scatter the Minds of Friends, by that Loose Plea, *What hast thou to do with me? leave me to my Freedom, and to the Grace of God in my self,* and the like; but this Proposition and Expression, as now understood and alledged, is a Deviation from, and a Perversion of the Antient Principle of Truth; for this is the plain Consequence of this Plea, if any one (especially if they are but lately convinced) shall say, *I see no Evil in paying Tythes to Hireling Priests, in that they are not claimed by Divine Right, but by the Civil Laws of the Land. I see no Evil in Marrying by the Priest, for he is but a Witness.* Furthermore, *I see no Evil in declining a publick Testimony in Suffering times, or hiding in times of Persecution, for I have* Christ's *and* Paul's *Examples. I see no Evil in Worshipping and Respecting the Persons of Men; for whatever others do, I intend a sincere Notice that I take of those I know, and have a good Esteem for.* Lastly, *I see no Evil in keeping my Shop shut upon the Worlds* Holy-days *and* Mass-days (as they call them) *though they are rather Lewdly and Superstitiously than Religiously kept; for I would not willingly give any Offence to my Neighbours.* And since your Testimony is against Imposition, and for leaving every one to the

Meaſure of the Grace which God hath given him, not only, *No man hath Power to reprove or judge me, but I may be as good a Friend as any of you, according to my Meaſure.* And now, here is *Meaſure ſet up againſt Meaſure*, which is Confuſion it ſelf—*Babel* indeed: This is that very Rock both Profeſſors and Prophane would long ſince have run us upon, namely, *That a way is hereby opened to all the Worlds Libertines, to plead the Light within for their Exceſſes*; Which indeed grieves the Spirit of God, & was ſeverely judged by our Friends in the beginning, and is ſtill reproved by them that keep their Habitation, though ſome are become as wandering Stars through their own Pride, and the Prevalency of the hour of Temptation that hath overtaken them; whereas had they kept in the Channel of Love and Life, in the Orbe and Order of the Celeſtial Power, they had ſhined as fixed Stars in the Firmament of God forever. And from the deep Senſe that I have of the working of the Enemy of *Zions* Peace, to rend and divide the Heritage of God, who under the pretence of crying down *Man*, *Forms* and *Preſcriptions*, is crying down the *Heavenly Man Chriſt Jeſus, his bleſſed Order and Government*, which he hath brought forth by his own Revelation and Power through his faithful Witneſſes. This I further teſtifie, *Firſt*, That the Enemy by theſe fair Pretences ſtrikes at the Godly Care and Travail that dwells upon the Spirits of many faithful Brethren, that all things might be preſerved Sweet, Comely, Virtuous, and of good Report in the Church of God. *Secondly*, That there never was greater neceſſity of this Godly Care than at this day, ſince we were a People, wherein the Croſs by too many is not ſo cloſely kept to as in dayes paſt, and in which there is not only a great Convincement, but a Young Generation deſcended of Friends, who though they retain the Form their Education hath led them into, yet many of them adorn not the Goſpel with that ſenſible, weighty and heavenly Converſation as becomes the Children of the Undefiled Religion, and the Seed of that precious Faith which works by the Love that Overcomes the World. And the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, that hath ſent his Son Chriſt Jeſus a Light into our Hearts and Conſciences, to whoſe Search and Judgment all ought to (and muſt) bring their Deeds, & render up their Account, beareth holy Record, that for this end

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hath he moved upon the Spirits of his Servants, and for this good end only have his Servants given forth, recommended, and put in Practice thoſe things that are now in Godly Uſe among his People, whether in this or other Nations, relating to *Men* and *Womens Meetings*, and their divers and weighty *Services*. And further; in the fear of the Almighty God, I ſhall add, That heavenly Peace and Proſperity dwell with thoſe who are found in a holy and zealous Practice of them; wherefore I warn all, that they take heed of a ſlight and obſtinate Mind, and that they have a care how they give way to the Outcry of ſome, falſly entituled, *Liberty of Conſcience againſt Impoſition*, &c. for the end thereof is to lead back again, and give eaſe to the Carnal Mind, which, at laſt, will bring Death again upon the Soul to God, and the living Society of his Children. And indeed, it is a great ſhame that any who have ever known the Truth of God in the inward Parts, and the ſweet Society of Brethren, eſpecially thoſe who were early in the Work of this bleſſed Day and heavenly Diſpenſation, ſhould ſo far depart from the Fear and Awe of the Lord, as to uſe ſuch Unſavoury, as well as Untrue Expreſſions; this is very far from that Meek Spirit of Jeſus, and the firſt Love, which they pretend to have ſo ſingularly kept in, which beareth all things, ſuffereth all things, and endureth all things, and teacheth to keep the Word of Patience in the Hour of Tribulation; Nay, but this is judging of Spiritual things with a Carnal and Prejudiced Mind, ſtumbling at the Matter, for the ſake of the Perſons through whom it comes, not eying nor weighing the Spirit the thing ariſes from, but the Perſon by whom it is ſpoken, which darkens the Eye of the Underſtanding, and blinds by Prejudice the Mind that ſhould diſcern, taſte and judge; from whence many Miſchiefs have ſprung to the Church of Chriſt in divers Ages: Nor is it the leaſt Evil this Spirit of Strife is guilty of, even at this day, that it uſeth the words, *Liberty of Conſcience* and *Impoſition* againſt the Brethren, in the ſame manner as our ſuffering Friends have been alwayes accuſtomed to intend them againſt the perſecuting Prieſts and Powers of the Earth, as if it were the ſame thing to admoniſh and reprove Conceited, High-minded, Looſe or Contentious Perſons in the Church, as to compel Conformity in

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matters of Faith and Worſhip, by Worldly Violence upon the Perſons and Eſtates of Conſcientious Diſſenters: O ſuch Iniquity God will not leave unreproved!

This, *Dear Friends*, I ſend amongſt you, as a token of my true Love, in the Revelation of the free Spirit of our God and Father, who have ever been a Friend to true Liberty, as in the State according to Law, ſo in the Church according to Scripture, and as it ſtandeth in the Truth of Jeſus, that makes them who love it Free indeed. Let us all keep low, and remember the Rock from whence we were hewn, and dwell in a tender and reverent Senſe of the daily Mercies and Providences of the Lord, looking well to our own Growth and Proſperity in his heavenly Way and Work, then ſhall the Deſire of our Hearts be more and more after him, and the remembrance of his Name, and with our Love to God, will our Love encreaſe one towards another, helping and aiding one another: And I no ways doubt, but God that has brought us out of the Land of *Ægypt*, and out of the Houſe of *Bondage*, and delivered us from the *Mouth* of the *Lyon*, and the *Paw* of the *Bare*, will preſerve his People from this Uncircumciſed Spirit that is not in Covenant with God, nor under the Yoke of his Holy Royal Law of *True Spiritual Liberty*; for they that keep and walk in the Light of Jeſus, are fenced from the Power of this Crooked Serpent, that ſeeks whom he may betray; nor are any ſtung by him but the Unwatchful, the Liſteners and Hearkeners after his jealous Whiſpers, and detracting Inſinuations: They are ſuch as make their Dwelling in the Earth, where his Region is, and where he creeps and twiſts, who is Earthly, Senſual and Deviliſh, and ſo is all the Wiſdom that comes from him.

My dear Friends, Keep, I pray you, in the Simplicity of the Truth and Croſs of Jeſus, and wait for your daily Bread, and to be daily renewed from the Lord; look to your Increaſe about Eternal Riches, and be ſure to lay up Treaſure in Heaven, that fadeth not away, that your Faith and Hope may have Eternal Foundations, which the croſs Occurrences of Time and fears of Mortality cannot move; and beware of that Looſe and Irreverent Spirit, which has not thoſe in high eſteem among you, that are faithful in the Lords Work, and that labour in his bleſſed Word

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and Doctrine: I plainly ſee a coldneſs and a ſhortneſs on this hand, and be the pretence as it will, it is not pleaſing to the Lord: They that love Chriſt, his Servants are dear to them, and they bear a tender Regard to their Tryals, Travails, Spendings and Sufferings, who ſeek not yours, but you, that you may all be preſented Blameleſs at the Coming of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, that ſo the Goſpel Miniſtry and Teſtimony may be held up with holy fervent Love and Godly Eſteem, to the keeping under every raw and exalted Mind, and whatever may ſlight and turn againſt it, leſt God that has Richly viſited us with his Fatherly Viſitations and Day ſpringing from on High ſhould remove his Bleſſing from amongſt us, and place his Candleſtick amidſt another People. Be wiſe therefore, O *Friends!* for behold, he is at the Door that muſt have an Account of your Stewardſhip: Be watchful, keep to your firſt Love and Works, that ſo you may endure to the End, and be ſaved: And having Overcome, you may have right to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the midſt of the Paradiſe of God.

The God of Peace, who hath brought our dear Lord Jeſus from the dead, and Us with him, more abundantly enrich you all with Wiſdom and Knowledge, in the Revelation of himſelf, through Faith in his Son, by whom in theſe laſt dayes he hath ſpoken to us, who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath Immortality; to whom be Honour and Power Everlaſting. Amen.

Your Friend and Brother in the Tribulation and Salvation of the enduring Kingdom of our God,

William Penn.

Warninghurſt in *Suſſex*, the 20th of the 9th Moneth, 1681.